

Dies Irae



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DIES IRÆ

THE GREAT DIRGE OF
THOMAS DE CELANO.

The Latin text here given, with a strict prose translation, and three new versions in rhyme, together with a brief account of the hymn.

By
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THE DIES IRÆ is the most intense and representative embodiment of the religious feeling of the middle ages. The Germans call it the "giant hymn." In majesty and in influence only the *Te Deum* is its peer. It is the incomparable threnody of all time. Its power is amazing and immortal.

Whether one considers its rugged and simple form, its coherent and cumulative thought, its sublime and sweeping movement, its stern and lofty imagery, its fullness of scriptural allusion, its quivering utterance of the deepest affirmations of conscience, or its solemn penitential appeal to Christ Himself, it remains the profoundest voice of guilty man fronting the cataclysms of eternal judgment and turning to God alone as the refuge of souls.

It flashes with forelight of the splendors and terrors of that last ordeal and gathers all

hearts and all issues to face the focal day of Earth's "strange eventful history."

Its impetuous human cry to the Judge of all—"hiding from God in God"—sounds the litany of a world. Before the absolute knowledge of Him with whom we have to do, it arraigns the common conscience of mankind. Here speaks the unsophisticated sense of the moral necessity of that assize without whose certainty the present postponements of equity would leave the sovereignty of Holiness unintelligible. This is the intuition of ultimate justice which long ago spoke in Plutarch's calm and deep meditation, "Concerning such as the gods are slow to punish," and in that elder appeal of Abraham, at once to the truth and the clemency of the Almighty—"Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?"

Like the tolling of a midnight bell, like the beating of thunder among the mountains, like the sound of many waters, like the very voice of the archangelic trumpet, this penitent yet believing cry throbs out of the past.

Its roll and tread haunts the memory like the sway and rumbling of a catafalque. Its

monotone grieves on as some mediæval chant wails along cathedral aisle and transept, echoing at last where the ghostly traceries of stone lose themselves in high perpetual shadows. As if with the strokes of a heavy hammer, its iterations, whose very sounds suggest the scene they portray, stagger and break the spirit of mortal pride. Here is the epitaph of all conceit and confident self-righteousness: but here also is hope for the mind, in submission to the righteousness of God, shut up to simple mercy.

Its glooms are shot with that unapproachable light, in which, brooding above the weltering chaos of fear, the Holy Ghost commands day out of the dark, and shows the glories of forgiveness in the face of Jesus Christ.

Imagination and devotion fly amid these sombre skies with clasped hands, and with faces which, tho strained with the agonies of conviction, are wet with tears whereon the gospel has set rainbows.

Hope, out of self-despair, faith out of fear, love rapt from anguish—these three abide, amid “the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds.”

For it is no dream. These surf-beats of emotion answer to realities which only a covenant with falsehood can gainsay, and which a hypnotized conscience, tho it can forget, can never abate nor postpone. Here, for once, is the soul of guilty man facing the inevitable hour when

*“Every wrong shall be set right,
Every secret brought to light,”*

and, while confessing judgment, yet daring, in the sense of immeasurable ransom, to look with meek but undismayed confidence into the very eyes of God, and to leap, palpitating and dumb, into His eternal arms.

The fervid lines turn directly upon that final scene. The mind even forgets their guidance and fixes its gaze upon the objects of the astounding hour when ‘offence’s gilded hand’ shall no longer ‘shove by justice,’ when ‘one prodigious ruin’ shall engulf the seen and the temporal, and in consternation and flame the great equities shall all be fulfilled.

Then shall that great monition, breathed at every papal enthroning be verified — “*Sic transit gloria mundi.*” Under ‘the revelation

of the righteous judgment of God' the docket of the centuries shall be cleared — "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil: but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good."

By the most careful students, this marvellous dirge is ascribed to the pen of Thomas de Celano, an Italian friar, and one of the twelve disciples of that fiery, poetic, and organizing spirit — Francis of Assisi.

Thomas de Celano became the apostle of the Franciscan order, and, having been the Superior of convents at Cologne, Worms, and elsewhere, died in Italy about 1255 A. D.

His was an agitated and tragic time. The strifes of Guelph and Ghibelline were at their height. The passions of the last crusades were burning. The plague was ever at the door. Amid the confusion and misery, the vast unrest and portentous sorrow, of that seething period, this psalm of destiny was written. Its author passed but a few years before Dante was born. In the stern portrayals of that supreme son of Italy may best be sought the dark reflection of those days. Every page of their annals is

blurred by insurrection, by rival hatreds, by profligate tyrannies and hideous wars.

Not until long after the fingers were dust that had penned it, did this chant of the last things begin to take its immortal place in the missals of the Church. By the end of the 15th cycle it had come into accepted and general use. Originally and essentially an Advent hymn, it became the sequence in the mass for the dead, and in the liturgy of the Latin Church it is set for the service of All Souls' day, November the second. It stands august in the "Requiem" of Mozart, 1791, his final and noblest work. None can hear without awe and solemn hope the last strophes of that number which contains this deathless voice of contrite faith, and which, in the final cadence—"where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest"—culminates in harmonies that match the thoughts they upbear!

The oldest known form of the *Dies Iræ* is that contained in a MS. of the Bodleian Library at Oxford, which is a Dominican missal dating late in the 14th century. It is this text that here is given and that, with two verbal excep-

tions, is now in common use in the Roman Church.

Of this text, however, the last six lines are of uncertain origin.

For a comprehensive account of this hymn and many of its English renderings, one may best seek the masterly "Dictionary of Hymnology," just now issued under the head editorship of the Rev. John Julian, M. A., of Sheffield, England,—an indispensable repertory of exact research in the whole department of religious lyric.

The limits of these pages preclude the lengthened particulars as to its literature and use, which he who would pursue the story of this Latin canticle may find in the above volume.

The study of the *Dies Iræ* has fascinated a multitude of scholarly and devout minds. One of the most elaborate essays upon this hymn, albeit somewhat of a special plea, is that of Orbey Shipley, Esq., covering pages 48–77 and 369–396 of the *Dublin Review*, volume 92, 1888. Writing from the Roman Catholic viewpoint, he undertakes to prove the superiority to all others of the English translations made by

writers in the Roman communion. The plea is not conclusive, and it is superfluous; for excepting the last two lines, which are unauthentic, there is not a word in the hymn itself that is not common to the faith and feeling of the Church Universal.

Howbeit, fifty versions are collated, and with fair-minded and instructive criticism. Of all these, it is shown that but seven accord with the metre, the form, and the dissyllabic rhyme of the Latin. This tabulation is significant of the difficulties under which so many have confessed their inadequacy, and have been fain to content their efforts with forms which fail of the structural accent,—the detonation, of the original.

The “Blackwoods,” volume 87, contains a version by P. S. Wormsley, from which at least one American translator has borrowed with exceeding *naïveté*.

Dr. Phillip Schaff, who has touched little that he has not both elucidated and adorned, and whose prolific labors have ranged under his name investigations in all the realms of historical theology, contributed two thoro articles upon this hymn and its story to the “Hours at

Home " magazine, pp. 39 *sq.*, and pp. 261 *sq.*, 1868. (See also his "Christ in Song," 1868.)

His list of references to the literature of the subject, and the abundant specimen excerpts from existing translations, together with much admirable and learned comment, is introduced by the full text and by a rendering of his own, which, however, does not attempt the double endings of the Latin, and which contains the false rhyme of "forgive" with "thief."

Dr. Schaff's sketch will reward careful attention. It closes with the questionable dictum that "The French language is poorly adapted for poetry in general and especially of the solemn kind." Of this curt decision the Huguenot Psalter is a sufficient reversal.

In chapter xxiii of his "Latin Hymns" (1889), the late Samuel W. Duffield, whose ingenious energy has made the treatment of his whole theme brilliant and entertaining, but not all of whose conclusions have had the acceptance of other specialists in this field, wrote enthusiastically upon this great relic of mediæval devotion. The translation with which he concludes is worthy of note, and its limitations are but

one more tribute to the elusive quality of that which it attempts to reproduce.

A bulletin of the Mercantile Library of Philadelphia (Oct., 1884), by Mr. John Edmands, presented a notably full bibliography of the hymn in its manifold English forms, which, better than any other *resumé* of its wide use, shows its hold upon the liturgical instinct of the Church. This technical account of its prevalence is an index which no student should overlook.

Outdoing the more than one hundred translations into the German of the stanzas of Thomas de Celano, there are in English probably not less than one hundred and fifty.

Of all who have sought to transfer to our own tongue this unequalled movement, Dr. Abraham Coles has the pre-eminence for assiduity. Some fifteen versions of his attest the alluring impossibilities of the task.

Dr. Coles has with fine insight written upon the genius of the poem, and has expressed what Dr. Schaff calls 'a lively sense of its untranslatableness.'

All kinds of people, of all traits, creeds, and

skill, have turned to the work of reproducing the Dies Iræ in English verse. Its great esteem with both critical and uncritical minds, its constant rendering and imitation, its influence upon many another sacred song, as, for instance, the composite,

“*Lo! He comes, with clouds descending,*” its common public use in some twenty or thirty forms, all these, together with the large literature of its history, show its hold upon the reverent imagination.

The first rendering into English was that in the “Divine Weeks” of Joshua Sylvester, 1621. From that date down to 1825, some ten translations were published or written. From 1825 to the present there have been upwards of one hundred. Of all these the powerful cento, in three stanzas, by Sir Walter Scott, has had the most general use in the hymnody of the Church.

Among other translators stand Macauley, Trench, and Henry Alford. The form given by Alford (1845) is terse, clear, and of great dignity: but not without the false junction of “penned” with “contained”—a slip of the graving tool that mars all the cameo. This

version may be found in Schaff's "Library of Religious Poetry."

The version by W. J. Blew in the "Church Tune and Hymn Book," 1852, deserves especial regard. If any have equalled, none has surpassed it.

In "McMillans," volume 19, 1869, (see too vol. 30,) the late Dean Stanley, spite of some defects of quantity and rhyme, furnished a remarkably condensed equivalent of the hymn. It refuses some of the stress of the original upon the scenery of the judgment, and utters the more subjective idiom of the present day.

The fullest presentation of the hymn and its translations familiar to American readers is contained in "The Seven Great Hymns," published by A. D. F. Randolph, 1868. Of the versions in this book, that of Maj. General John A. Dix, in 1872 elected governor of the state of New York, has been much praised, altho by no means the most literal and just that has been made. It was penned at Fortress Monroe, amid the ordeals of 1862, and twelve years later, in the then Scribner's Monthly (vol. 2, p. 797) was retouched by him. This revision

is more polysyllabic and not an improvement, and it contains the slipshod non-rhyme of “dawning” with “warning.”

Upon all such dissonances the words of Sidney Lanier, that fine artist in form, are irrefutably just—“If the rhyme is not perfect, if it demands any the least allowance, it is not tolerable. No rhyme but a perfect rhyme is ever worth a poet’s while.”

The earlier form by General Dix is very free, has several false rhymes, as, *e. g.*, in stanzas 3 and 11, and lamely reiterates the final words of 14 in 17. Its rendering of the difficult and pathetic 10th stanza is especially good, and shows the version at its best—

*“Worn and weary, Thou hast sought me;
By Thy cross and passion bought me;
Spare the hope Thy labors brought me.”*

In this stanza, Dr. Coles’ first translation as it stands in the volume named, is also simple and strong. Dr. Coles’ numerous renderings are reasonably accurate, but somehow fail to sustain the breath and pulsation of the Latin.

This movement and feeling are on the other hand notably present in the deservedly praised

attempt of Wentworth Dillon, Earl Roscommon. His stanzas 8, 9, 10, 11, are ardent and tender and convey the impetus of the original : but his product is a free paraphrase rather than a translation, and even its best features have been equalled by the work of others.

Richard Crashaw's rendering, 1646, is quaint and vigorous, with many appealing touches, tho it discards the prosody of Thomas Celano. Stanzas 4, 6 and 7 are its strongest. This form reminds one of the queer, but often charming, conceits which so abound in Quarles and in Wither. The 8th, 10th, and 11th stanzas illustrate this style of diagonal suggestion.

This line, in 12, is beautiful,—

“ If Sin can sigh, Love can forgive.”

And these, in 14,—

*“ But Thou, Thy bounteous self still be,
And show Thou art by saving me.”*

And the final couplet is noble,—

*“ My hope, my fear — my Judge, my Friend,
Take charge of me and of mine end.”*

The next translation, by Edward Slosson, Esq., is close, and moves firmly in thoro sympathy with the strict and iterative beat of the text.

It shows the superiority, in English rhyme, of the masculine over the feminine cadence.

The above named seven leave to be mentioned but one of this group—that by Dr. William J. Irons, (1812–1883), who died Prebendary of St. Pauls, London, and who was the author of many hymns of high merit. This earnest and sturdy rendering, maintaining as it does the cadences of the text, is the most alive and intense of all this group. It must stand among the foremost of the English versions, and it has attained the widest popular use of them all, most nearly rivalled, under this test, by that of Henry Alford. As it was issued in 1849, it would seem to have guided and impelled much that is given in the form by General Dix. It is, however, not ideally faultless, substituting assonance for consonance in the rhymes of stanzas 1 and 5, and admitting dissonant terminals in 13 and 15. Its first stanza follows the “CRUCIS EXPANDENS VEXILLA” of the Paris text. The 7th and 9th stanzas are peculiarly effective, and so is the 3d, which well illustrates the force and fidelity of this strong rendering—

*“Wondrous sound the Trumpet flingeth,
Thro Earth’s sepulchres it ringeth,
All before the Throne it bringeth.”*

None can study, still less can one try to translate, this mighty sequence without feeling that its adequate equivalent in another tongue is impossible. The English language, with its abundant derivatives, is surely the nearest to the spirit of this hymn, yet its genius is pre-eminently Latin, and its deep artistic secret eludes transfer.

And so, to reflect that vowel assonance, whose very sound echoes the sense; to follow strictly the stately trochaic tetrameter; to find rhymes that, neither mechanical nor undignified, shall always be exact; to avoid bad inversions; to omit no thought and to insert none; to keep the just mean between paraphrase and metaphrase, and to avoid both; to succeed, even approximately, in all these, and to maintain the consecutive and panoramic ongoing of these strains as they were first given, is a task that none can perfectly fulfil.

As it is impossible to be perfect, so it is impossible to be original. The *idea* of the

total result of all translations of this judgment pean is a product to which new efforts may contribute: but in which none can claim priority or finality.

Reference will be excused to two previous translations made by the present writer, and published in his "Song of Miriam," 1888. The fascination of this song of the last things must be pleaded as the only justification of this added effort more nearly to grasp the spirit of its solemn plaint, while conforming to the stringent limitations of its construction.

In his great review of Dryden, Dr. Sam. Johnson, (Cunningham ed., 1:348-9,) with his burly sense, makes some observations upon the canons of translation, and it is with deference to the principles there affirmed that the versions offered in this present volume have been undertaken.

They are but tentative: but the writer is emboldened by considering that of all the representations of the *DIES IRÆ* in English verse, there have been only five or six which have not been blemished by forced or false rhymes, or by deviation from the rhythm or the genetic

stanza form, or by either the neglect of shades of meaning or the intrusion of alien ideas.

But exigencies are no excuse. They must be overcome. Compromise with them is confessed defeat.

For instance, in no translation this writer has seen, is the sense of "*favilla*" recognized. It does not mean 'ashes': but hot embers—*sparks*.

The stanzas most difficult to render are the 1st and 9th, and of the first, as an illustration of possible variations, these alternatives are given—

Day of ire, that day appalling!
All this cycle flaming, falling,
Psalm and Sibyl thus are calling.

or,

Day of woe beyond comparing!
Sinks the globe in fires unsparing,
Seer and Sibyl so declaring.

But of these each is freer than the stanza beginning the final translation in this book, and neither of them is so faithful as that to the very words of the hymn.

Whoever reads these remarks is earnestly

urged back to the Latin itself as the thing to be pondered.

It is an oft-remembered saying of Aristotle's that it is the office of dramatic poetry "by pity and terror to accomplish the purification of the passions." By this rule, in fact if not in form, the *DIES IRÆ* is to the highest degree dramatic.

It thrills and throbs with "centurial antiphonals that long have slept." It may well awaken all generations from the anæsthesia of sense. It marshals the august certainties of impending account with a summons whose moment irresistibly compels our heed.

It is an apocalypse of

"*The pomp of that tremendous day,*"

which, as in all the New Testament, is fore-spoken in the last words of the Apostle Peter—"in the which the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the Earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in *all* holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of

God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to His promise, we look for new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

THREE VERSIONS.

“Dies Iræ, Dies Illa, dies tribulationis et angustiae, dies calamitatis et miseriae, dies tenebrarum et calignis, dies nebulæ et turbinis, dies tubæ et clangoris super civitatis munitas, et super angulos excelsos!”

Sophonia 1:15, 16.

1

DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA;
TESTE DAVID CUM SIBILLA.

2

QUANTUS TREMOR EST FUTURUS,
QUANDO JUDEX EST VENTURUS,
CUNCTA STRICTE DISCUSSURUS.

3

TUBA MIRUM SPARGENS SONUM,
PER SEPULCHRA REGIONUM,
COGET OMNES ANTE THRONUM.

“The great day of Jehovah is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of Jehovah; the mighty man crieth there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fenced cities, and against the high battlements!”

Zephaniah 1:14-16.

LITERAL PROSE RENDERING.

1

DAY of wrath! that day!
The age shall dissolve in glowing embers,
David with the Sibyl being witness.

2

How great a tremor is there to be
When the Judge is about to come,
All things strictly investigating.

3

The trumpet, scattering wondrous sound
Thro the sepulchres of the lands,
Compels all before the throne.

4

MORS STUPEBIT ET NATURA,
CUM RESURGET CREATURA,
JUDICANTI RESPONSURA.

5

LIBER SCRIPTUS PROFERETUR,
IN QUO TOTUM CONTINETUR,
UNDE MUNDUS JUDICETUR.

6

JUDEX ERGO CUM SEDEBIT,
QUICQUID LATET APPAREBIT,
NIL INULTUM REMANEBIT.

7

QUID SUM MISER TUNC DICTURUS?
QUEM PATRONUM ROGATURUS?
CUM VIX JUSTUS SIT SECURUS.

4

Death will be stupefied, and Nature,
When the Creature shall rise again,
Respondent to Him who judges.

5

The book written shall be brought forth,
In which is the whole contained
Whence the world may be judged.

6

Therefore when the Judge shall be seated
Whatsoever is hidden shall appear ;
Nothing will remain unavenged.

7

Miserable ! what am I then to say ?
Whom to entreat as an advocate ?
When scarcely can one who is just be secure.

8

REX TREMENDAE MAJESTATIS,
QUI SALVANDOS SALVAS GRATIS,
SALVA ME, FONS PIETATIS.

9

RECORDARE JESU PIE
QUOD SUM CAUSA TUAE VIAE
NE ME PERDAS ILLA DIE.

10

QUAERENS ME SEDISTI LASSUS,
REDEMISTI CRUCEM PASSUS,
TANTUS LABOR NON SIT CASSUS.

11

JUSTE JUDEX ULTIONIS,
DONUM FAC REMISSIONIS,
ANTE DIEM RATIONIS.

8

King of tremendous majesty,
Who of grace savest those to be saved,
Save me, Fount of Pity.

9

Recollect, pitiful Jesu,
In that I am a cause of Thy life ;
Nor give me to ruin in that day.

10

Searching for me, Thou sat'st fatigued,
Thou didst redeem, enduring the cross,
So great labor can not be wasted.

11

Just Judge of retribution,
Make the gift of remission,
Before the day of account.

12

INGEMISCO TANQUAM REUS,
CULPA RUBET VULTUS MEUS,
SUPPLICANTI PARCE, DEUS!

13

QUI MARIAM ABSOLVISTI,
ET LATRONEM EXAUDISTI,
MIHI QUOQUE SPEM DEDISTI.

14

PRECES MEAE NON SUNT DIGNAE:
SED TU BONUS FAC BENIGNE,
NE PERENNI CREMER IGNE.

15

INTER OVES LOCUM PRAESTA,
ET AB HOEDIS ME SEQUESTRA,
STATUENS IN PARTE DEXTRA.

12

I bewail as one convicted.
My face is flushed with guilt,
Spare the suppliant, O God !

13

Thou who didst absolve Mary,
And didst hearken to the thief,
To me also Thou hast given hope.

14

My prayers are not worthy :
But Thou Good One, act benignly,
Nor burn with everlasting fire.

15

Among the sheep appoint a place,
And set me forth from the goats,
Stationing among the right hand part.

16

CONFUTATIS MALEDICTIS,
FLAMMIS ACRIBUS ADDICTIS,
VOCA ME CUM BENEDICTIS.

17

ORO SUPPLEX ET ACCLINIS,
COR CONTRITUM QUASI CINIS,
GERE CURAM MEI FINIS.

18

LACRYMOSA DIES ILLA!
QUA RESURGET EX FAVILLA
JUDICANDUS HOMO REUS;
HUIC ERGO PARCE, DEUS.

PIE JESU DOMINE,
DONA EIS REQUIEM.

16

The silenced and accursed
Being devoted to the bitter flames,
Call me among the blessèd.

17

I pray on, suppliant and prostrate,—
A heart contrite as if ashes,
Have Thou care of mine end.

18

That day of tears !
In which he shall rise up from the embers,
To be judged, man the culprit ;
Him therefore spare, O God !

Blessed Lord Jesus,
Give to them peace.

A CLOSE VERSION : BUT IN SINGLE RHYMES.

1

DAY of wrath, that mighty day !
Earth in flames shall melt away ;
David so and Sibyl say.

2

Trembling shall there be how great !
When the Judge is at the gate,
All things strict to separate.

3

Now the trumpet's boding tone,
Thro sepulchral regions strewn,
Urgeth all before the throne.

4

Then shall Death and Nature quake,
When Creation shall awake,
Answer to her Judge to make.

5

Forth the written book is brought,
In which is the total fraught,
Whence the world is set at naught

6

When the Judge shall therefore sit,
Every secret shall be quit:
Unavenged remain no whit.

7

What shall I then say,— impure!
Whom for advocate procure,
While the just is scarcely sure?

8

King, of boundless majesty,
Who dost save the savèd free,
Well of mercy! save Thou me.

9

Recollect, good Lord, I pray,
I was one that caused Thy way,
Nor condemn me in that day.

10

Seeking me, Thou sat'st o'erspent,—
Cross of ransom underwent,
Not for naught such toil was lent.

11

O just Judge of last redress,
With Thy free remission bless,
Ere that day of righteousness.

12

Lo, I mourn mine utter blame,
Reddens all my face with shame,
Spare Thy suppliant, by Thy Name!

13

Who didst pity Mary's grief,
And didst hearken to the thief,
E'en to me Thou'st given relief.

14

Nothing worth are prayers of mine :
But, Thou Good One, be benign,
Nor in endless fire confine.

15

Place among the sheep decide,
From the goats my soul divide,
In the right-hand part to bide.

16

When th' accurst confuted rest,
To those bitter flamings prest,
Summon me with all the blest.

17

Suppliant, prone, my prayer I spend,
To the dust my heart I bend ;
Take Thou care of my last end.

18

Oh that lamentable day:
When from ashes hastes away
To be judged a man undone,
Therefore, O God, spare that one.

Give, O Jesus, unto them,
Gracious Lord, Thy requiem.

ANOTHER VERSION IN SINGLE RHYME,
SOMEWHAT FREER.

1

DAY of anger, day august!
Time shall fall in fiery dust;
Psalm and Sibyl show it must.

2

What immeasurable fear,
While the Judge is drawing near,
All with equity to clear.

3

Peals the trump's appalling breath
Thro the scattered realms of death,
“ *All before the throne!* ”—it saith.

4

Nature, Death, it shall astound,
When Creation bursts the ground,
To that last tribunal bound.

5

Open spreads the written roll,
Wherein is contained the whole
Whence the world shall find its dole.

6

When the Judge is seated so,
That which now is hid shall show,
Nothing will unpunished go.

7

Woful, what am I to speak,
Whom then for a friend to seek,
When the very just is weak?

8

King, whose splendor none can face,
Who dost save the saved of grace,
Fount of pity, me embrace.

9

Jesu blest, the record see
How I caused Thine agony,
Nor that day abandon me !

10

In my search Thou sat'st in pain,
Bore the cross my soul to gain,
Task so mighty ne'er was vain.

11

Righteous Judge of who shall live,
Gift of Thy remission give,
Ere that day retributive.

12

As a culprit still I cry,
Wears my face the guilty dye,
Spare thy supplicant, Most High !

13

Thou, who pardonest Mary there,
Nor didst let the thief despair,
To me also hope dost bear.

14

Of no merit mine appeal :
But, Good Lord, in mercy deal,
Nor to endless torment seal.

15

Place appoint among Thy sheep,
Not with that lost band to weep,
At Thy right my station keep.

16

When the doomed are dumb with shames,
Sentenced to devouring flames,
Bid me with the blessed names !

17

Poor and downcast still I plead,
To a burned-out heart give heed!
Keep me in my final need.

18

That sad day, in which he must
Rise up from the blazing dust,
Guilty man, for judgment shod,
Therefore pity him, O God!

Blessèd Jesus, give to these,
O Thou Lord, an endless peace.

PRESERVING THE STRUCTURE OF THE LATIN, IN
ITS TRIPLET VERSES, TROCHAIC MEASURE,
AND DISSYLLABIC RHYMES.

1

DAY of wrath, that day of crying !
All the age in embers lying ;
Psalm with Sibyl testifying.

2

Vast shall be the consternation,
When the Judge is at His station,
For that stringent separation.

3

Dreadful blast the trumpet swelleth
Where the world sepulchral dwelleth,
All before the throne compelleth.

4

Death shall stand aghast, and Nature,
When, to make response, the Creature
Surgeth to that judicature.

5

Lo, the written book inspected,
Where is all the sum collected
Whence the world shall be rejected.

6

With the Judge thereat alighted,
Every hidden thing recited,
Nothing shall go unrequited.

7

What shall I then say, heart-broken !
Where my counsel be bespoken,
When the just hath scarce a token ?

8

King, tremendous in Thy splendor,
Who dost free salvation render,
Source of grace, be my defender !

9

Jesus kind, Thy record borrow
That 'twas I once caused Thy sorrow,
Nor destroy me in that morrow.

10

Worn Thou sat'st, my soul alluring,
Didst redeem, the cross enduring,
Is such task no end assuring?

11

Thou strict Judge of vindication,
Grant me Thy commiseration,
Ere that day's investigation.

12

Thus I mourn my deep transgression,
Flushed my face with guilt's confession;
Heed, O God, mine intercession!

13

Thou who once absolvedst Mary,
Nor wert to the robber chary,
Gav'st me hope shall never vary.

14

Nothing can my prayers be earning :
But, O Good One, show Thy yearning,
Plunge me not in endless burning ;

15

'Mong the sheep a place commanding,
From the goats my soul disbanding,
With the right part give me standing.

16

They by sin for sentence fitted
Then to piercing flames committed,
Call Thou me with those acquitted.

17

Urgent, bowed, I still petition,
Low as dust my heart's contrition,
Care Thou for my last condition.

18

Ah, that day when grief o'erfloweth !
And from fiery dust upgoeth,
Judgment-bound, that soul affrighted,
God ! Thy grace to him be plighted !

Jesus pitiful, O Lord,
Unto such Thy rest afford.

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